

"Grasp the Life of Man Complete!"

inaugural

Goethe: *Faust*, Prelude On Stage

Dear Readers,

You are looking at the first dedicated English-language issue of our journal. We now feel the time has come to offer the outside world a comprehensive image regarding the profile, mission and programme of the festival as well as of the spirit of mental preparation that is mirrored in *Szcenárium*. It was a surprise even to us when it turned out that since the very first MITEM of March 2014 until today we have published no less than 60 articles related to the meeting which can be considered studies in their own right. Some of these have been penned by such internationally renowned authorities as Eugenio Barba, George Banu, Jeanne-Pierre Tibaudat, Beatrice Picon-Vallin or Sebastian-Vlad Popa, but the majority of the articles reflects a Hungarian understanding.

Last year, on the occasion of the third MITEM, we already published a mostly English-language issue concerning the 2015 and 2016 festivals. Its table of contents can be found on the back cover of the current issue and the articles themselves can be retrieved from the English-language MITEM homepage.

With regard to the current issue, we deemed it essential to hold a mirror to ourselves as hosts of the festival. In a three-part series of interviews, the director of the National Theatre in Budapest, Attila Vidnyánszky gives an overview of the current stage of his artistic career and of the present shape of the institution he has been heading for four years now.

Like last year, we also publish a summary of the previous festival's performances. Let us be frank: even though we call this a meeting, the attending companies seldom have the luxury to see all the other performances. This way – at least through this flash report – they will have a chance to get acquainted with one another and have some feedback on how the Hungarian audience (as represented by the two editors) has received their productions.

For the past fifty years, Eugenio Barba has been carrying the message that theatrical practices, despite their diversity, are guided by the same fundamental principles both in the East and West. If we accept that, we must also have the confidence that theatre can be the most effective tool for dialogue among cultures, helping us to avoid a clash of civilisations threatening with a global catastrophe. This threat stems from the inability to communicate through political discourse alone. In our view, this dramatic situation can elevate the mediatory role of the Central European region as a whole and that of Hungary in particular. Our current publication wishes to emphasize that the increasingly prominent presence of major European issues at MITEM signals a welcome step change.

Zsolt Szász, managing editor of *Szcenárium*



William Blake's watercolour illustration of *The Grave* by Robert Blair, 1805 (source: blakearchive.org)